



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION AND CAREER MATURITY OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER

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ABSTRACT

The occupational aspiration of the individual at young age has a definite impact on choice of occupation at later years. Career decisions are generally made at secondary school stage. It is a critical period for the development of career maturity, when students are faced with academic and occupational decisions over the course of their study. Their future career decisions depend upon their current level of occupational aspirations and career maturity. The appropriate decision making depends upon the level of career maturity and occupational aspirations of students. The present paper is an attempt to study the levels of occupational aspiration and career maturity of secondary school students of Delhi. The paper studies what relationship exists between occupational aspiration and career maturity of secondary school students. This study also compares the occupational aspiration and career maturity of senior secondary school male and female students. This study was conducted on 50 male and 50 female students of class XIth of 2 government senior secondary schools of Delhi.

KEY WORDS: Occupational Aspiration, Career Maturity, Gender.

Introduction

Choosing an occupation is the most important and an inevitable event in the life of an adolescent. Due to individual differences some students are more attracted to a certain occupation and others are less attracted to that occupation. In the modern society each student is to be equipped with adequate knowledge and skill to have realistic occupational aspirations and make age appropriate career decisions. Understandingly, occupational aspiration at this stage is a crucial factor as it gives direction to one's future. The career decisions and choices made early in one's life have a direct impact on subsequent success and satisfaction.

Occupational Aspiration

Occupational aspirations are the thoughts, feelings, fantasies and goals that people have about their work, that affect their motivation and decision making with respect to their occupational choice and subsequent participation in their occupation. Rojewski (2005) defined occupational aspirations as "an individual's expressed career related goals or choices". Johnson (1995) referred to it as expressions of occupational goals, leading several authors to regard them as important career motivational variables, proving to be predictive of later career attainment levels (Chung, Loeb, & Gonzo, 1996). Indeed, Looker and McNutt (1989) argued that adolescents' occupational aspirations are a cause rather than an effect of educational and career attainment. Adolescents' occupational aspirations and expectations have been viewed as significant determinants of both short-term educational and long-term career choices. The critical role for occupational aspirations in the career development of adolescents is reflected in their integral position in most career theories and in the large body of research conducted over the last half century (Rojewski, 2005).

Concept of Career Maturity

Career maturity is a construct that was introduced by Donald E. Super as "vocational maturity" in his career development theory around 60 years ago. Career maturity is the degree to which one has reached a point in the development of cognitive, emotional and other psychological factors whereby one acquires the capacity of making realistic and mature choices (Super, 2005). Greater the maturity, greater is the probability that the individual is able to make wise, sincere and satisfactory decisions with regard to career choices. It enables the individual to cope with developmental tasks at different stages of career development. Career maturity is the ability to make appropriate occupational choices that fit the individual's abilities, occupational interests and occupational preferences. Because of this maturity long term vocational adjustment is considered to be more likely. Crites also focused on career maturity and postulated that maturity would increase over time. He proposed that the most important stage in career development is the establishment phase (age 16 to 25 years), which is a good predictor of future career success.

Need and significance of the Study

Occupational aspiration and career maturity are the factors that are highly affected by vocational guidance. Occupational aspirations and career maturity have been conceptualized within career developmental theories as a major career developmental task for adolescents when seeking careers. As adolescents become more career mature they need to consider their abilities, interests and values in forming their occupational aspirations (Super, 1990). Many students are not able to obtain an informal exposure to a variety of occupations. Students have

a limited knowledge of occupations and a very narrow range of alternatives are available to them. In many of the cases, an individual makes choice of a career as a result of the parental pressure, or as an influence of friends or prestige value of that occupation, not on the basis of his/her interests, abilities, and values. Students, who do not know the routine features of work like nature of work, tasks involved, skills and eligibility required for various careers, end up making unrealistic occupational aspirations. Therefore, it is important to understand the level of students' occupational aspiration and career maturity so that career guidance programmes, interventions and modules can be developed further accordingly.

Statement of the Problem

A Comparative Study of Occupational Aspiration and Career Maturity of Senior Secondary School Students in Relation to Gender

Operational Definition of Terms

Occupational Aspiration

Occupational aspirations are individuals' expressed career related goals or choices that affect their motivation and decision making in respect of their occupational choice and subsequent participation in the occupation.

Career Maturity

Career maturity can be defined as an individual's readiness to make well informed, realistic, age-appropriate career choices and decisions. It is the ability to gather information about the self in order to gain insight, to obtain the necessary competencies in order to make an informed decision, to integrate self knowledge and the knowledge of world of work, and implementing this knowledge when planning a career.

Objectives

- 1) To study the level of Occupational aspiration and Career Maturity of Senior Secondary School Students in relation to gender.
- 2) To study the relationship between Occupational Aspiration and Career Maturity of senior secondary school students.
- 3) To compare Occupational Aspiration of senior secondary school male and female students.
- 4) To compare Career Maturity of senior secondary school male and female students.

Hypotheses

- 1) There will be no significant difference between the levels of Occupational aspiration and Career Maturity of Senior Secondary School Students in relation to gender.
- 2) There will be no significant relationship between Occupational Aspiration and Career Maturity of senior secondary school students.
- 3) There will be no significant difference between Occupational Aspirations of senior secondary school male and female students.

- 4) There will be no significant difference between Career Maturity of senior secondary school male and female students.

Methodology

The present research study falls under the 'Descriptive survey method'. Descriptive research is concerned with the present conditions, situations, events and practices and deals with relationship among variables.

Population and Sample

The target population is Male and Female Students of Humanities/Arts stream studying in class 11th in Government Senior Secondary Schools of Delhi. Sample of the study was selected randomly from 2 Government Senior Secondary Schools of South Delhi. Sample of the study comprises of 50 male and 50 female students of class XIth of Arts stream.

Tools for data collection

- 1) Occupational Aspiration Scale developed by J. S. Grewal
- 2) Career Maturity Inventory, Indian adaptation by N. Gupta

Delimitation of the study

- 1) The present study is delimited to Government Schools of Delhi only.
- 2) The present study is delimited to class XIth students.
- 3) The present study is delimited to class XIth students of Humanities/Arts stream only.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The collected data was analysed descriptively by applying appropriate statistical techniques and calculating percentage, mean, SD, 't' values and Pearson correlation. The hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance.

Table 1: Representation of the levels of occupational aspiration in relation to gender

Gender	Levels	C.I.	Percentage
Male (50)	High	53 – 64	34 %
	Average	41 – 52	48 %
	Below Average	29 – 40	18 %
Female (50)	High	54 – 65	30 %
	Average	42 – 53	52 %
	Below Average	30 – 41	18 %

The above table indicates that 34% male students have high level of occupational aspiration, a bit higher to girls i.e. 30%. The results indicate that more girls (52%) have average occupational aspiration in comparison to boys i.e. 48%. While girls and boys both demonstrated equal percentages at below average level of occupational aspiration i.e. 18%

Table 2: Representation of career maturity in relation to gender

Gender	Levels	C.I.	Percentage
Male (50)	High	69 – 85	5 %
	Average	52 – 68	26 %
	Below Average	34 – 51	19 %
Female (50)	High	54 – 65	16 %
	Average	42 – 53	25 %
	Below Average	30 – 41	9 %

As indicated by the above table more girls (16%) showed high level of career maturity in comparison to boys (5%). Only a slight difference was found between the average levels of career maturity of boys and girls. A big difference was found between below average career maturity of male and female students. More male students (19%) demonstrated low level of career maturity in comparison to female students (9%).

Table 3: Coefficient of correlation between occupational aspiration and career maturity of senior secondary school students

	N	Correlation	p value	Remarks
Statistics	100 (50 M & 50 F)	- .118	0.241	*significant correlation at 0.05 level

*p<0.05

The above table indicates that p value 0.241 is statistically significant because it is lower than 0.05. This significant p value suggests that there is statistically significant correlation between Occupational Aspiration and Career Maturity of senior secondary school students. The Pearson r value -.118 further suggests the

direction and magnitude of this correlation between two variables. The r value -.118 indicates the weak and negative correlation between Occupational Aspiration and Career Maturity of senior secondary school students. That means decrease or increase in one variable leads to increase or decrease in the other variable or vice versa but in low magnitude.

Table 4: t test of significant difference between occupational aspiration of male and female senior secondary school students

Statistics	Male (50)	Female (50)
Means	48.40	48.10
SD	9.34	8.32
SEM	1.32	1.17
Df	98	
T	0.170	
SED	1.769	
p value (two tailed)	0.866	

*p<0.05 (significant)

From the above data it is clear that the p value 0.36 is lower than 0.05. The p value is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The t value is also significant at 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is interpreted that there is significant difference between Career Maturity of Senior Secondary male and female students.

Results & Discussion

Male students were found better at high occupational aspiration level while female students had higher career maturity. Krishan Lal, (2014) also found that more of the female adolescents fall in the category of high level of career maturity and more of the male adolescents fall in category of low level of career maturity. The present study concludes that there is a weak and negative relationship between occupational aspiration and career maturity. However various studies have found a positive relationship between career maturity and occupational aspiration among senior secondary school students. The study concludes that students do not differ on the variable of occupational aspiration in relation to gender. The study also concludes that the gender of students affects their career maturity and there is a significant difference between career maturity of male and female students. It is clear from this study as well that females have higher career maturity than boys. The finding of the present study pertaining to the gender disparity with respect to career maturity confirms the findings of Alvi & Khan (1983); Hasan (2006); Naidoo et al. (1998); Herr & Enderlein (1976); King, (1989); Lokan (1984); Luzzo (1995) Westbrook (1984) that females have higher scores on career maturity measures than males. Similarly study Luzzo (1995), Rojewski, Wicklein, & Schell (1995) too have revealed that young women have significantly higher levels of career maturity than young men.

Implications of the study

Career guidance and counseling needs to be introduced as an integrated component of the curriculum at all stages of school curriculum with diverse objectives depending upon the needs of the students in each stage of education. Career programmes and modules focusing on occupational aspiration and career maturity should be prepared. This would ensure a strong foundation to make career decisions appropriately at secondary and senior secondary stages of education. Moreover, during the secondary stage well formulated and realistic concepts about self and the world of work need to be developed which would enhance their career maturity and would be helpful in easier transition from school to work.

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